

# Montana Chef Competition 2005

## Culinary Excellence Award

### Gold Class: Entrée

**Recipe Name:** Montana Inspired Braised Lamb Shank, Big Sky Forest Mushroom Ragout with Goat Cheese Quenelles and Emerald Basil Oil

**Chef:** Executive Chef Thomas Siegel, CEC

**Restaurant:** [University of Montana Dining Services](#)



#### Chef Profile:

Thomas Siegel, CEC, Executive Chef of [University of Montana Dining Services](#), University of Montana, University Center, #5 Campus Drive, Missoula, received a Gold Class award in the Culinary Excellence Award program held recently at Buck's T-4 Lodge in Big Sky.

Siegel has been at [University of Montana Dining Services](#) for 27 years. His Gold Class award was in the Entrée category for a creation titled *Montana Inspired Braised Lamb Shank, Big Sky Forest Mushroom Ragout with Goat Cheese Quenelles and Emerald Basil Oil*. (See recipe.)

His advice to aspiring cooks: "Approach the food that you cook with respect. Recognize the unique terroir that local fresh foods contribute to flavor, bring that flavor forth and play others in the background. Appreciate the inherent characteristics of the simplest flavors for what they are. Try to keep flavors simple so they can all be identified. That is the theme of this recipe entry."

**Yield:** 4 portions

**Montana Products:** Big Timber Meats – Lamb shanks; Big Sky Mushrooms – Mushrooms, [Montola Growers, Inc.](#) – Safflower oil; Western Montana Growers Co-op – carrots, onions, shallots, garlic, chives, thyme, tomatoes; [Mission Mountain Winery](#) – Riesling; [Meadow Gold Dairy](#) – butter, heavy cream, eggs; [Amaltheia Dairy LLC](#) – plain chevre, [Lifeline Farms](#) – sharp white Cheddar cheese; [Wheat Montana Farms & Bakery](#) – All-purpose flour

<i><b>Braised Lamb Shanks</b></i>	
<i>Ingredients:</i>	<i>Amount:</i>
Big Timber Meats Lamb fore shanks, 16-18 oz each	4 each
Kosher salt	2 tsp.
Black pepper	1 tsp.
<a href="#">Montola Growers, Inc.</a> Safflower oil	2 tsp.
Western Montana Growers Co-op Carrot, medium diced	4 oz.
Western Montana Growers Co-op Onion, medium diced	4 oz.
Western Montana Growers Co-op Shallot, chopped	2 oz.
Western Montana Growers Co-op Garlic, chopped	1 oz.
<a href="#">Mission Mountain Winery</a> White wine, Riesling	¾ cup
Vegetable stock	2 ½ cups

*Montana Inspired Braised Lamb Shank, Big Sky Forest Mushroom Ragout  
with Goat Cheese Quenelles and Emerald Basil Oil*

**Method:**

1. Fabricate Lamb fore shanks by frenching lower section of the fore shank and disconnecting the arm bone horizontally from the fore bone. Reserve trim and arm bone section for another use. Season frenched shank section with salt and pepper.
2. In a rondeau, heat the oil, brown shanks, and remove.
3. Degrease pan, and deglaze with wine.
4. Add vegetables and sweat until soft. Return shanks to the pot along with stock.
5. Cover, heat on stovetop briefly then place in 300-degree oven for 65 minutes.
6. Check for doneness. Meat should be fork tender. Keep warm for service.
7. Reserve braising liquid.

<b><i>Big Sky Forest Mushroom Ragout</i></b>	
<i>Ingredients:</i>	<i>Amount:</i>
Big Sky Mushrooms – shitake, oyster, morel mix	6 oz.
Western Montana Growers Co-op Garlic, minced	1 Tbsp.
<a href="#">Meadow Gold Dairy</a> Butter	2 oz.
Western Montana Growers Co-op Shallots, minced	2 oz.
<a href="#">Mission Mountain Winery</a> White wine – Riesling	½ cup
Braising liquid from shanks, strained	½ cup
<a href="#">Meadow Gold Dairy</a> Heavy Cream	½ cup
Kosher Salt	¾ tsp.
Freshly ground black pepper	½ tsp.
Western Montana Growers Co-op Thyme, fresh, minced	1 tsp.
Western Montana Growers Co-op Tomatoes, peeled, seeded and medium diced	6 ½ oz.
Western Montana Growers Co-op Chives, cut ¼ - inch	2 tsp.

**Method:**

1. Sauté mushrooms, garlic, and shallots in butter until soft, about 2 minutes.
2. Deglaze the pan with wine, bring it to a boil and reduce by half.
3. Reserve approximately one quarter of the mushrooms for later use as garnish. Keep warm.
4. Add braising liquid from the shanks and reduce total liquid in half.
5. Add the cream and again reduce total liquid in half.
6. Add salt, pepper, thyme, tomatoes, and approximately ¾ of the chives and simmer for 5 minutes.
7. For service, garnish with reserved mushrooms and chives.

*Montana Inspired Braised Lamb Shank, Big Sky Forest Mushroom Ragout  
with Goat Cheese Quenelles and Emerald Basil Oil*

<b><i>Goat Cheese Quenelles</i></b>	
<i>Ingredients:</i>	<i>Amount:</i>
<a href="#">Amaltheia Dairy LLC</a> Plain chevre	4 oz.
Whole eggs	1 each
Egg yolks	1 each
<a href="#">Lifeline Farms</a> Sharp white Cheddar cheese, fine shred	3 oz.
Kosher salt	$\frac{3}{4}$ tsp.
Nutmeg, ground	$\frac{1}{8}$ tsp.
Cayenne pepper	$\frac{1}{16}$ tsp.
<a href="#">Wheat Montana Farms &amp; Bakery</a> All-purpose flour	3 oz.

**Method:**

1. In a mixer with a paddle, mix the goat cheese and all the eggs until smooth.
2. Add white cheddar cheese, salt, nutmeg, cayenne, and flour. Mix briefly on until the mixture comes together. Refrigerate 1 hour.
3. With tablespoons, shape the Quenelles into ovals and drop Quenelles into barely simmering salted water. Cook until they float.
4. Remove and keep warm for service or plating. Alternately Quenelles may be steamed for approximately 8 minutes.
5. Arrange 3 Quenelles around each shank and drizzle basil oil around the Ragout.

<b><i>Emerald Basil Oil</i></b>	
<i>Ingredients:</i>	<i>Amount:</i>
Basil, fresh	4 oz.
Flat leaf parsley, fresh	1 oz.
<a href="#">Montola Growers, Inc.</a> Safflower oil	2 Cups

**Method:**

1. Blanch Basil and Parsley in water for 3 seconds, squeeze water out.
2. Place in blender with oil and blend to a liquid.
3. Strain the mixture through sieve lined with cheesecloth.
4. Place in a tall narrow container and allow any pulp to settle to the bottom.
5. Decant the clear clean looking transparent green oil from any sediment.

**Presentation / Plating Notes:**

Pre-heat plates.

<i>Ingredients:</i>	<i>Amount:</i>
Braised Lamb Shanks	4 each
Mushroom Ragout	2 cups
Goat Cheese Quenelles	12 each
Basil Oil	4 tsp.

*Montana Inspired Braised Lamb Shank, Big Sky Forest Mushroom Ragout  
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**Method:**

1. To assemble, place one Braised Lamb Shank in the center of a broad bowl.
2. Top each Shank with approximately ½ cup of the Ragout
3. Arrange 3 Quenelles around the Shank and drizzle Basil Oil around the Ragout.
4. Garnish with reserved Mushrooms and chopped Chives.
5. Serve immediately.